

Kathmandu: Representatives of the Nepal Judiciary, Nepal Bar Association, Civil Society, The Asia Foundation, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) came together to celebrate the accomplishments of USAID's Strengthen Rule of Law program today, February 24, 2010. This program is increasing access to justice for society's most vulnerable groups; expediting the delivery of justice through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms; and improving the administration of the courts.

The two-year \$1.7 million program, funded by USAID and implemented by The Asia Foundation, was designed in extensive consultation with the Judiciary and NGO partners. The close-out ceremony was attended by many senior judges and justice sector dignitaries who lauded U.S.-Nepal cooperation and appreciated the program's contributions to improving the quality and access to justice in Nepal.

Dr. Kevin Rushing, Mission Director of USAID/Nepal, remarked "In post-conflict settings like Nepal, re-establishing and strengthening the rule of law is crucial to ensure the transition to peace and to enable development. Through these efforts many more Nepali are now able to obtain redress and justice through the legal system – reducing the temptation to resort to illegitimate means. As debates about restructuring the Nepali state continues, the U.S. Government remains firmly committed to promoting the idea that democracy will only be sustainable if it is underpinned by good governance, citizen's access to justice, and a broader respect for the rule of law."

The program established three new court-annexed mediation centers and two commercial mediation centers and continued to support operations of three mediation centers opened under a previous project. In just the two-year program period, more than 1,700 cases were referred for mediation, helping reduce the numbers of back-logged cases and expedite the delivery of justice for the average Nepali and these referrals will continue. Chief Guest at the event, honorable Ram Prasad Shrestha, Supreme Court Justice, said "The Supreme Court is committed to maintaining the current centers and expects to open 22 additional centers across the country."

To improve the administration of justice in courts, the program provided technical and material assistance, including training to over 500 justice-sector personnel. The program also introduced an effective case tracking and management system across several courts in Nepal, including the Supreme Court. This has reduced the time required for a court case to proceed from filing to final decision; increased access to court files by clients; and improved communication and

The Strengthen Rule of Law program provided free legal aid for over 900 people unable to afford their own attorneys, as well as public interest litigation that helped spur significant positive social change by pushing the government to comply with existing laws and raising public awareness about injustices.

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USAID अनुदानमा ँ सधिया फउन्डेशनले कस्यान्वयन गरेको सत्र लाख डलरको यो दुई वर्षे कार्यक्रमको रुपरेखा न्यायपालकि र सहकमी गैर-सरकारी संस्थाहरुसँगको वसितृत वचिरवमिरशाबट तयार गरि के थथी ँ समापन कार्यक्रममा वभिनिन वरषिट न्यायाधीशहरु तथा न्याय क्षेत्रक उच्च पदाधिकरीहरु सहभागी थिँ ँ उनीहरुले अमेरकि-नेपाल सहकार्यको प्रशंसा गर्नुक साथै नेपालमा न्यायको स्तर र पहुँचमा सुधारको लागि कार्यक्रमले गरेको योगदानहरुको सराहना गरे ँ

यस कार्यक्रमले अदालतसँग जोड्ने क तीनवटा नयाँ मेलमलाप केन्द्रहरु र दुईवटा व्यापारिकमेलमलाप केन्द्रहरुको स्थापना गर्नु यो र अघिल्लो परधियोजना अन्तर्गत स्थापना गर्नु क तीनवटा मेलमलाप केन्द्रहरुको सहयोगलाई नरिन्तरता दियो । दुई वर्षीय कार्यक्रम अवधमि नै १७०० भन्दा बढी मुद्दाहरु मेलमलापद्वारा सुलझाउन सफिरशि गरियो जसले संचित मुद्दाहरुको संख्यालाई कम गर्न मददत पुरनु याई साधारण नेपालीहरुमार्थ न्याय प्रदानमा तीव्रता ल्यायो र यस्ता सफिरशिहरुलाई नरिन्तरता दिईनेछ । कार्यक्रमक मुख्य अतर्था तथा सर्वोच्च अदालतक माननीय न्यायाधीश श्री रामप्रसाद श्रेष्ठ ज्यूले भननुभयो "सर्वोच्च अदालतले वर्तमान केन्द्रहरुलाई कयम राख्ने प्रतबिद्धता ल्नु के छ र देशभर थप २२ वटा केन्द्रहरु स्थापना गर्ने लक्ष्य राखेके छ । "

कन्नूनी शासनके सुदृढीकरणसम्बन्धी कार्यक्रमले नजिी वकील राख्न सक्ने क्षमता नभएको १०० जनाभन्दा बढी व्यक्तिहरुलाई नगरी शुल्ककानुनी सेवा उपलब्ध गराउनका साथै सार्वजनिकसरोकारसम्बन्धी मददाले सरकारलाई वदियमान कानूनहरुको पालना गरन लगाई तथा अनयायहरुबारे सार्वजनिकचेतना

अभिवृद्धिगिराई उल्लेखनीय सकारात्मक सामाजिक परिवर्तनलाई प्रोत्साहन गरेको छ ।

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